

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
MCE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-13  
/103 W

-----086405 270813Z /10

R 270500Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2545  
INFO DA WASHDC  
JUSMAG-K//MKPP-F/MKAR//  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 6590

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR ACDA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PCAT, MASS, KS, US  
SUBJECT: ARMS TRANSFER REQUEST -- ROK REQUESTS 155 SP/HOW

REF: A) 77 STATE 207984 (DTG 310241Z AUG 77) B) 77 STATE 252478  
(DTG 211400Z OCT 77); C) 77 SEOUL 6708 (DTG 110326Z AUG 77)

1. THE ROK DEFENSE MINISTRY ADVISES US THAT THEY INTEND TO  
SUBMIT, THROUGH ROK EMBASSY WASHINGTON, REQUEST TO PURCHASE  
TWO BATTALIONS OF SELF-PROPELLED MPOA1B 155 MM HOWITZERS. WE  
FAVOR APPROVAL OF THE SALE REQUEST, AND OFFER THE FOLLOWING  
ASSESSMENT:

2. NEED FOR AND USE OF THE ITEM -- ROK ARMY (ROKA) GIVES  
HIGH PRIORITY TO ITS ONGOING EFFORT TO NARROW THE GAP IN  
ARTILLERY CAPABILITY BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE NORTH KOREAN  
ARMY (KPA). THE MASSED CONCENTRATION OF FORCES ALONG THE  
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KOREAN DEMARCATION LINE, COUPLED WITH ROKA'S COMMITMENT  
TO HALT AND REVERSE ANY ENEMY OFFENSIVE IN THE 25-MILE  
SPACE BETWEEN SEOUL AND THE DMZ, ACCORDS TO ARTILLERY  
A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ANY FUTURE KOREAN CONFLICT. LONG-  
RANGE ARTILLERY WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT, AS IT IS  
LESS VULNERABLE TO NEUTRALIZATION THROUGH EITHER  
COUNTERFIRE OR THE ENCIRCLEMENT AND OVERRUNNING OF

POSITIONS WHICH WILL INEVITABLY OCCUR IN THE CONFINED SPACE IN WHICH THE BATTLE IS EXPECTED TO BE FOUGHT. THIS PROPOSED ACQUISITION IS INTENDED TO UPGRADE THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE ARMY'S LONG-RANGE HOWITZER FORCE BY INTRODUCING A COUNTERATTACK SUPPORT CAPABILITY WHICH ROKA'S TOWED 155MM AND 8 IN. GUNS DO NOT PRESENTLY PROVIDE. THESE NEW GUNS' RAPID RATE OF FIRE AND HIGH DEGREE OF CREW PROTECTION RENDER THEM EQUALLY ADAPTABLE, ACCORDING TO THE TACTICAL SITUATION, TO EITHER GENERAL FIRE SUPPORT OR DIRECT SUPPORT OF A COUNTERATTACKING FORCE. USE OF THESE GUNS COINCIDES WITH US DOCTRINE UNDER WHICH ALL MECHANIZED UNITS ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE SP155'S FOR DIRECT FIRE SUPPORT.

3. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION -- ROKA ALREADY OPERATES AND MAINTAINS SIMILAR EQUIPMENT, AND WILL BE ABLE TO INTEGRATE THESE GUNS INTO ITS FORCE WITHOUT RELIANCE ON RC ARMY FOR CREWS OR MAINTENANCE SERVICES. AMERICANS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN INITIAL SUPPORT OF THE SALE WOULD BE LIMITED TO A TWO-MAN QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM AND A FIVE-MAN NEW EQUIPMENT TRAINING TEAM. PARTS SUPPLY, OVER AND ABOVE INITIAL PROCUREMENT, WOULD BE A MATTER OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATION AND WOULD PROBABLY END UP AS A MIX OF DIRECT PURCHASE, PURCHASE THROUGH US ARMY SUPPLY SYSTEM, AND LOCAL MANUFACTURE.

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4. FINANCING -- THIS PD FMS REQUEST ON CODE FOUR TERMS (DOWN PAYMENT; BALANCE BILLED BY US ARMY). NO US CREDIT OR FINANCING HAS BEEN REQUESTED.

5. UNC JUDGEMENT -- UNC RECOGNIZES THE TACTICAL REQUIREMENT FOR THESE WEAPONS AND FAVORS SUPPORTING THIS ACQUISITION. ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE WEAPONS SYSTEMS SHOWS THE M109A1 155 MM HOWITZER POSSESSES THE CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE THE EXTENDED RANGE, FIREPOWER, AND MOBILITY OF A GENERAL SUPPORT ARTILLERY WEAPON BEING USED IN EITHER A DEFENSIVE OR LIMITED COUNTERATTACK ROLE.

6. RELATIONS TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES -- THE ONLY NEIGHBORING COUNTRY LIKELY TO BE CONCERNED IS NORTH KOREA, WHICH HAS VEHEMENTLY DENOUNCED ANY AND ALL ENHANCEMENT OF THE ROK'S MILITARY CAPABILITY WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY DEVOTING A LARGE PORTION OF GNP TO DEVELOPING HER OWN. TWO BATTALIONS OF LONG-RANGE HOWITZERS WILL GIVE ROKA AN IMPROVED DEFENSIVE AND LOCAL COUNTERATTACK CAPABILITY, YET REPRESENT NO THREAT AT ALL TO THE KPA EXCEPT IN THE EVENT OF AN INVASION OF THE ROK.

7. ARMS-CONTROL IMPLICATIONS -- ROKA NEEDS THREE GUNS FOR ITS OWN USE, AND THE ROK HAS AN EXCELLENT RECORD OF COMPLIANCE WITH US RETRANSFER RESTRICTIONS, THUS WE SEE NO DANGER OF UNAUTHORIZED THIRD COUNTRY SALES.

8. ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE ROK -- FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE ROK'S FORCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN, IN WHICH THIS ACQUISITION IS INCLUDED (FIP P/N 313), AS WELL AS OF THE ROK MILITARY BUDGET AS A WHOLE, SEE PARA 17-20, OF REF C. GENERALLY THE MILITARY BUDGET'S IMPACT IS CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE. THE COST OF THESE ITEMS WILL BE MUCH REDUCED, WITH PERHAPS SOME ECONOMY-OF-SCALE SAVINGS TO THE USG AS WELL, IF PROCUREMENT CAN BEGIN IN TIME TO KEEP THE PRODUCTION LINE, WHICH IS PRESENTLY OPERATING TO  
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FILL US ARMY ORDERS, IN OPERATION. THE PRESENT LINE IS SCHEDULED TO REMAIN OPEN THROUGH FY 80, AND A REQUEST HAS BEEN SUBMITTED BY DA, THOUGH NOT YET APPROVED, TO EXTEND IT INTO FY 81.

9. RELATIONSHIP TO ARMS-TRANSFER POLICY -- ADDITION OF THESE HOWITZERS, WHICH ARE STANDARD WITH US FORCES, TO ROKA'S ARSENAL, WOULD SERVE THE NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF BOTH THE US AND THE ROK TO THE EXTENT THAT IT ENHANCED THE LATTER'S ABILITY TO HONOR ITS DEFENSIVE OBLIGATIONS. IT WOULD ALSO INTRODUCE A FIREPOWER CAPABILITY NOT PROVIDED BY ROKA'S EXISTING SELF-PROPELLED 8 IN. HOWITZERS. THE TWO BATTALIONS THAT THE ROKG IS SEEKING

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
MCE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-13  
/103 W

-----084903 270817Z /10

R 270500Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2546  
INFO DA WASHDC  
JUSMAG-K//MKPP-F/MKAR//  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 6590

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR ACDA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

TO BUY, HOWEVER, WOULD GIVE ROKA COMMANDERS VALUABLE MUSCLE IN MOUNTING A LOCAL COUNTERATTACK WITHOUT BEING ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A GENERAL, FRONT-WIDE COUNTERATTACK OR AN INITIAL OFFENSIVE. IT IS THUS NOT A DESTABLIZING, BUT RATHER AN ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE, CAPABILITY. IT IS WORHT NOTING AS WELL THAT ROK INDUSTRY ALREADY PRODUCES 155MM GUNS AND DIESEL ENGINES, AND THAT A CAPABILITY FOR TRACKED CHASSIS AND FIRE CONTROL UNITS WILL SOON BE INTRODUCED. IT WOULD BE WELL WITHIN AGENCY FOR DEFENSE DEVELOPMENT'S (ADD'S) CAPABILITY WITHIN A FEW YEARS TO DEISGN AND CONTRACT OUT TO LOCAL INDUSTRY A HEAVY SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZER. WHETHER ADD WOULD BE TASKED TO DO SO IS ANOTHER MATTER, BUT THE MOTIVE FORCES INVOLVED IN SUCH A DECISION, PRINCIPALLY ROKA'S NEED FOR THE TACTICAL

CAPABILITY THAT SUCH A GUN WOULD PROVIDE, PLUS THE BLUE HOUSE'S LEANINGS TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE IN DEFENSE  
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PRODUCTION, PRECLUDE RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY. YET ANOTHER CONSIDERATION IS THE ROK'S THIRD COUNTRY PURCHASE OPTION. FOR US TO SELL THE ROK THESE WEAPONS NOW, IN LIMITED QUANTITY AND UNDER US CONTROLS, THUS MAY INTRODUCE FAR LESS OF A DESTABILIZING POTENTIAL THAN DENYING THE SALE AND LEAVING THE ROKG TO SEE OTHER ALTERNATIVES.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION -- NO EFFECT IS ANTICIPATED.

11. ABILITY TO MONITOR USE OF EQUIPMENT -- THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF AN AMERICAN OVERALL COMMANDER IN KOREA GIVES THIS MISSION A UNIQUE CAPABILITY TO MONITOR THE USE OF US EQUIPMENT.

12. EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION -- EMBASSY RECOMMENDS ROKG REQUEST BE GRANTED.  
GLEYSTEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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